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PEPSE

Post-exposure prophylaxis after sexual exposure to HIV (PEPSE) is a type of medication that can be taken up to 72 hours after exposure to HIV to stop you becoming infected.

If you've had sex without a condom, or if the condom broke during sex, you may be able to use PEPSE.

It is vital that this medication is given within 72 hours of the potential exposure to the virus, as the medication is not effective after this time. The earlier PEPSE can be given the better. If you've had sex with somebody who you think may be HIV positive within the last 72 hours, it's important to get help straight away. Please don't leave it until the 72 hours is up or nearly up.

PEPSE is available from Whittall Street Clinic during opening hours, or from your nearest A&E department.

→ [How to find Whittall Street Clinic](#)

→ [Find an A&E department](#)

What you need to know before starting PEPSE

- The medication needs to be taken for one month after the initial dose to be effective
- It can have unpleasant side effects, e.g. nausea and diarrhoea
- We will need to monitor you carefully during the month when you take the tablets and then for another three months afterwards

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- If you have had a condom breakage during sex or have had unprotected sex with someone who is HIV positive, please attend Whittall Street Clinic (if it's within opening hours) or your local A&E department immediately
- The doctor will take a set of blood tests from you, to check for liver function and kidney function, and may test for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and syphilis
- You will have an HIV test prior to starting treatment, as if you are already HIV positive, giving PEPSE may reduce the types of HIV medication we can give you in the future
- The doctor will explain how to take the medication
- You will need to take a follow-up test 45 days after you complete the course of PEPSE treatment
- You will be asked to attend a hospital outpatient appointment to ensure you are not having any problems with the medication
- Once you have finished the month's course you will have an appointment for blood tests to check your kidney and liver function
- After three months we will ask you to come back in for a final HIV test

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A full screen for sexually transmitted infections and sexual health check-up are recommended if you need to take PEPSE.

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PEPSE should never be thought of as a substitute for using condoms.

Not sure which service you need? Worried because you've had sex without a condom? Let us help you choose the right option.

→ [Find the right service for you](#)

Further information



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[→ HIV information \(NHS\)](#)

See the FPA website for a range of downloadable leaflets on STIs and HIV.

[→ Download FPA leaflets](#)A photograph of STI testing kit packaging. The boxes are labeled 'STI testing kit' and 'Female' or 'Male'. They include instructions and a small diagram of a person. The packaging is white with blue and green text and graphics.

FREE STI kit

Take your own samples at home and return them to us for testing, all for free...

[Order a kit](#)

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Service locator

Need more help? Find local GPs, clinics and pharmacies to provide further help and support...

[Search locations](#)

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Have a question?
Look for answers here...

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Free condoms

Condoms are available for free from Umbrella clinics and pharmacies, and from some GPs.

[Get free condoms](#)



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FAQS



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